

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has reviewed and considered the Office Action and the cited references mailed January 12, 2005, and would like to thank the Examiner for his indication of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1, 8, 15-16 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,389,622 (HER, *et al.*).

In response thereto, claims 1, 8, 10 and 19 have been amended; and claims 2 and 9 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. As a result, claims 1, 3-8 and 10-19 are presently pending in the application.

Indeed, independent claim 1 has been amended so as to introduce therein the limitations of former claim 2, considered allowable by the Examiner. Former claim 2 has thus been deleted.

Similarly, independent claim 19 has also been amended so as to introduce therein the limitations of former claim 2.

Independent claim 8 has also been amended so as to introduce therein the limitations of former claim 9, considered allowable by the Examiner. Former claim 9 has thus been deleted.

Furthermore, the dependency of claim 10 has been modified accordingly so as to now depend on amended independent claim 8.

Hence, in view of the above modifications and information, the Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 8 and 19 are now new and inventive over the prior art cited, as indicated by the Examiner. Since all other pending claims depend directly or indirectly on these amended independent claims, and since the dependent claims define distinctively the subject matter which the Applicant regards as his invention, it is also believed that these claims are also new and non-obvious, and thus allowable.

It is to be understood though that no admission is made nor implied by the present amendment as to the fact that the prior art cited may be relevant. Indeed, this amendment is made solely to expedite the prosecution of the present application.

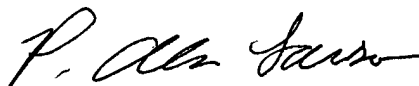
CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance, reconsideration of the present application and a favourable response are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite issuance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at 202/861-1792.

No extension-of-time fee is believed due. However any extension of time necessary to prevent abandonment is hereby requested, and any fee necessary for consideration of this response is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2036.

Respectfully submitted,

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